Funds Released through NEDFI for Infrastructure Development in NER

*554. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister during his recent visit to the North-East, declared that an amount of Rs. 50 crores will be disbursed by the Centre annually through the North-Eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDF) for entrepreneurship and infrastructure development in the region;

(b) if so, the source of this amount, terms and mode of payment;

(c) whether the said amount has already been released to NEDFI ;

(d) if not, the decision of Government in this regard; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to be released and the steps taken so far in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE) : (a) and (b) The Prime Minister in a conference of the Governors and Chief Ministers of the North Eastern States and Sikkim at Shillong on January 21-22, 2000 announced that a sum of at least Rs. 50 crores will be disbursed per annum by the North East Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi). The Board of Directors of NEDFi have approved business plan for a target of Rs. 85 crores for sanction for the year 2000-2001. With these sanctions and the cases sanctioned during the last year, NEDFi has reported that disbursement would be Rs. 50 crores during the current financial year.

(c) to (e) Do not arise as the disbursement is to be made by NEDFi and not by the Union Government.

Appointment of Special Co-ordinator on Kashmir

*555. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government attention has been drawn to the news-itme which appeared in ther Asian Age dated 14th March, 2000, that US is to appoint a special co-ordinator on Kashmir after President Clinton's visit to the region;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that the proposal has been under consideration for several months and that it is expected to be activated as a follow up to the presidential visit; and

(c) if so, the reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. Government has seen the news item referred to in the Question. The news item, written before President Clinton's visit, quoted unnamed "diplomatic observers" in Delhi as suggesting that the US may appoint a Special Co-ordinator for Kashmir after President Clinton's visist to South Asia.

(b) Soon after the armed intrusion in Kargil and the adverse comments in the US circles on Pakistan's misadventure, there was an attempt by Pakistan backed lobbies to seek the support of the members of the US Congress for the appointment of a Special US Envoy for Kashmir. The US Administration rejected the proposal to appoint a Special Envoy for Kashmir.

(c) Government does not react to comments attributed to unnamed non-official sources. Government has noted that both before and during his visit to India, President Clinton had stated that the US will not mediate on Kashmir.

Pakistan's offer to pick-up stalled Negotiations

*556. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan had lately offered to India to pick-up the stalled negotiations following the Kargil war;

(b) if so, when and on what terms; and

(c) what was Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) General pervez Musharraf and several spokesmen of the military regime in Pakistaan have in their recent poublic statements expressed the view that India and Pakistan should resume talks, but on an agenda determined by Pakistan.

(c) India, as the initiator of the dialogue process remains committed to a relationship of peace, friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. Towards that end, at our initiative, the Composite Dialogue Process was put in place. It is our view that a proper environment for meaningful dialogue has now to be